AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

COMPLETE LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-51 : (Canceled)

Claim 52 : (Currently Amended) A telecommunications system, comprising: one or more nodes; a plurality of telephone exchanges, two of which are arranged to communicate traffic with each other via the one or more nodes; wherein communication via the one or more nodes is in a packetized form of packets; wherein the one or more nodes comprise routers; wherein at least some of the telephone exchanges arranged to communicate with each other via the one or more nodes are trunk exchanges; wherein each of the trunk exchanges has a direct link to each of the one or more nodes; wherein communication via one or more of the routers uses internet protocol (IP) for the traffic; and an adapter for exchanging status information in a packetized form, said status information at least including traffic-blocking information to allow the flow of new traffic to the adapter to be stopped, the adapter also ~~and~~ including means for converting the traffic from the packetized form to a non-packetized form.

Claim 53 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, wherein at least some of the telephone exchanges arranged to communicate with each other via the one or more nodes are local exchanges.

Claim 54 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, wherein the communication includes telephone calls; and wherein all call handling in the system takes place outside of the one or more nodes.

Claim 55 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 53, wherein communication between the local exchanges and the trunk exchanges uses asynchronous transfer mode (ATM).

Claim 56 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, wherein each of the two or more telephone exchanges comprises routing data relating to communication with all other exchanges in the telecommunications system; and wherein the routing data is partially or wholly enabled.

Claim 57 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 56, wherein only that part of the routing data in a particular exchange relating to communication between that exchange and other exchanges with which that exchange is arranged to communicate via the one or more nodes is enabled.

Claim 58 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, comprising means for carrying voice traffic as asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) Adaptation Layer 1 (AAL1) or ATM Adaptation Layer 2 (AAL2).

Claim 59 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, comprising means for carrying voice traffic as voice over IP (VoIP).

Claim 60 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, wherein the adapter includes means for providing interworking between synchronous transfer mode (STM) and IP domains.

Claim 61 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 60, wherein the adapter includes means for detection of modem traffic.

Claim 62 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 61, wherein the adapter includes means for converting a detected modem signal to baseband data for packetization into IP.

Claim 63 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, wherein the traffic to be packetized comprises public switched telephone network (PSTN) circuits, and wherein the adapter is arranged to only packetize active PSTN circuits.

Claim 64 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 63, wherein the adapter includes means to communicate information on which PSTN circuits are not packetized using spare capacity within an IP logical route.

Claim 65 : (Previously Presented) The telecommunications system of claim 52, wherein the adapter includes means for compression of voice traffic.